

VZCZCXRO7434  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #4464/01 3400816  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 060816Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8352  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004464

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/28/2016  
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD LOCAL LEADERS SAY NOVEMBER VIOLENCE  
WEAKENED TRUST IN GOVERNMENT, LOWERED PUBLIC MORALE

Classified By: DEPUTY POLCOUNS ROBERT GILCHRIST FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Several District Advisory Council (DAC) Members in Baghdad and a number of average citizens expressed concern recently about what they see as a further decline in public faith in the central government following a spike in violence in November. The turning point, some said, was the November 23 Sadr City bombings -- that left approximately 200 dead -- and the subsequent retaliatory attacks. Mansour District Advisory Council (DAC) member Jabr Shabil al Duleimi (Sunni Arab) criticized the Iraqi army for allegedly allowing militias and insurgents to roam freely during curfews. He also cited reports that terrorists have increased threats to force Mansour schools to close down and have threatened residents to leave without their possessions. Shabil and other local leaders told us they fear the sectarian divide has deepened and Baghdad has become more polarized. End Summary.

-----  
WORSENING SECURITY, DECLINING MORALE  
-----

12. (C) In a meeting November 30, Mansour District Advisory Council (DAC) member Jabr Shabil expressed concern to EmbOffs about what he called a worsening security situation, asserting that Baghdad residents had "lost faith" in the central government's ability or willingness to make the city safe. He saw the late November attacks as a turning point. His sentiment was mirrored by Sadr City DAC member and emergency room doctor, Haider Jabr Zedan, who assessed on November 29 that public morale had reached a new low, a decline that began as far back as the al-Askaria Shrine on February 22. Sadr City resident and government employee Saad Sultan confirmed that residents were especially antagonistic towards the Iraqi government these days, believing it to be a "complete failure." Sultan indicated that for many residents, these renewed attacks indicated the security situation was worsening.

13. (C) Shabil not only asserted to EmbOffs that the central government was ineffective in providing safety, he also accused it of being actively involved in promoting insurgent and militia activity. He claimed that Baghdad residents "all knew that the Ministry of Interior was controlled by Shia militias." Additionally, he accused the local Iraqi army brigade of looking the other way when known Sunni insurgents passed through Gazhaliya and Ameriyia neighborhoods checkpoints in the aftermath of the Sadr City attack. "Only the political leaders can stop this bad situation; they are controlling this".

14. (C) The appearance of alleged militia and insurgent patrols during the post-Sadr City attack curfew led to further disillusionment with the government and its security organizations. In separate conversations November 25-27, Mansour DAC members Ali Sheya and Muhanned al Qadim confirmed reports that Iraqi Army members appeared to allow insurgent groups to roam freely during curfew. Reports that Jaysh al Mahdi militia or insurgents moved about freely during curfew also came from PolFSNs in the Jihad and 9 Nissan districts, Manar Fadili from the Rasheed District Council, and Dr Haider Zedan from the Sadr City DAC.

-----  
DISPLACEMENT, TURF BATTLES, AND CLOSED SCHOOLS  
-----

15. (C) Jabr Shabil said that Shia and Sunni conflict over territory in Baghdad neighborhoods continued, citing al-Adil neighborhood in Mansour district as an example. The mixed Shia-Sunni neighborhood of al-Adil is home to prominent Sunni leader of the same tribal affiliation as Jabr Shabil, Adnan al Dulaymi (leader of the Iraqi People's Conference party and head of the Tawafuq Council of Representatives bloc). According to Shabil, tensions between the Shia and Sunni communities in this district and other like areas have ignited into skirmishes between Sunni residents and Jaysh al-Mahdi militia, particularly in aftermath of the November 23 Sadr City attack.

16. (C) Shabil noted that Mansour district displacement trends continued to be high, particularly against Shia. Threat letters were now specifying that residents must leave their belongings, suggesting that these homes would later be occupied perhaps by Sunnis displaced from East

BAGHDAD 00004464 002 OF 002

Baghdad. Sunnis were also continuing to face displacement threats, reportedly by roving bands of JAM militia bands. However, Shabil claimed, in a tug of war for territory, Sunni Jaysh al-Omar bands later appeared in some neighborhoods to reassure Sunni residents and to subsequently intimidate their Shia neighbors.

17. (C) In Shabil's view, Baghdad was being further destabilized by increased militia and terrorist efforts to threaten schools (and teachers) into closure. In some cases, Mansour schools reported receiving a threat letter with a bullet enclosed. Human Rights Minister Wijdan Mikhail told Poloff in a recent conversation that even her own children, who went to school in the international zone, were being affected as teachers increasingly decided against going to work due to fears of attacks. Other human rights ministry colleagues indicated that they had begun to home school their children because of the closures and threats. (Note: Baghdad's Al Mada newspaper reported December 4 that a suggestion to reduce school hours for elementary students is being considered due to deteriorating security conditions. End Note)

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

18. (C) It is difficult to calculate completely the impact of the November 23 Sadr City attacks and the violent retaliatory aftermath, but the spike in violence clearly has affected the morale of many Baghdad residents. The views of this cross section of Baghdad local leaders and residents similarly indicate a deepening sense by many that the central government cannot be trusted to ensure security. There has also been exasperation with the national leadership. Shabil was adamant in pointing out that the political leaders must want to reach a resolution. He added that from his perspective on a Baghdad district council, "they don't appear close to doing so yet."

